



## NEWS RELEASE

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March 23, 2015

## Man Sentenced to 16 Years to Life in Prison For Killing Homeless Former Baseball Player

A 33-year-old transient was sentenced today to 16 years to life in state prison for killing a former professional baseball player in downtown Los Angeles, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

Billy Morales was found guilty by a jury in January of second-degree murder and the special allegation that he personally used a deadly and dangerous weapon, a knife, was found to be true.

Deputy District Attorney Jacqueline Mac said 55-year-old Rodney Craig was living on the streets and tried to stay at a homeless encampment on Aug. 17, 2013. Other transients did not let Craig stay there and kicked him out.

As he left the encampment, the victim tried to kick a dog, the prosecutor said. Morales and Anthony Johnson chased after Craig, caught him and began kicking and punching him. Evidence presented at trial showed that Morales fatally stabbed Craig once in the chest.

Johnson, 24, pleaded no contest to one count of assault by means likely to produce great bodily injury and was sentenced in August to six years in state prison. Johnson wasn't aware that Morales had a knife and intended to kill the victim, prosecutors said.

Case BA415281 was investigated by the Los Angeles Police Department.

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### About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to seeking justice for victims of crime and enhancing public safety. Last year, the [Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](http://da.lacounty.gov) prosecuted more than 71,000 felony defendants and nearly 112,000 misdemeanor defendants.